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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WARSAW 000930

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MCAP](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [PL](#)

SUBJECT: POLES INTENT ON SHAPING NATO'S REVISED STRATEGIC
CONCEPT

REF: A. WARSAW 360

[1](#)B. WARSAW 894

Classified By: Political Counselor F. Daniel Sainz for Reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Poland has high expectations for the upcoming revision of NATO's Strategic Concept (SC). Since joining NATO ten years ago, Poles believe they have paid their expeditionary dues in the Balkans and Afghanistan, and will insist that the Alliance now focus more attention on its traditional mission of collective defense. To this end, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and National Defense have already formulated initial negotiating guidelines for their mission to NATO, as well as for Professor Rotfeld, named by NATO SYG Rasmussen to the 12-member SC experts group. For Poles, a strong Concept is crucial to their sense of national security, as are the defense infrastructure, contingency planning, and exercises needed to back the Concept up. GoP officials have made it clear that Poland's future cooperation in out-of-area operations will require reciprocity: the Alliance must take into account Warsaw's security concerns, especially pertaining to potential threats posed by a resurgent Russia. END SUMMARY.

PAYBACK TIME

[1](#)2. (C) Poles believe that former Polish Foreign Minister Adam Daniel Rotfeld will be an influential member of the 12-member SC experts group. They were also gratified with NATO Secretary General Rasmussen's selection of former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright as the group's chair, since they perceive Albright as sympathetic to Central European security concerns. Piotr Soltysiak, Director of the MFA's NATO Section, said Poland's basic goal was to rebalance NATO operational planning to ensure that the Alliance's traditional mission of collective defense -- its raison d'etre -- received more emphasis. Soltysiak indicated that Poles had responded to every NATO call to action since joining the Alliance in 1999 -- particularly in the Balkans and Afghanistan. Although Poles had long warned of Russian intransigence, Soltysiak acknowledged that last year's conflict between Russia and Georgia had shaken the GoP. The conflict sparked a sense of urgency to re-orient the Alliance in ways that bolster Poland's sense of national security.

[1](#)3. (C) As noted in Ref A, senior GoP officials, including Prime Minister Tusk, Foreign Minister Sikorski, and Defense Minister Klich, have consistently supported NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operations in Afghanistan. All have cited "allied solidarity" as Poland's primary motivation for doing so, but the implicit quid pro

quo is that Poland also expects the Alliance to come to Poland's aid in the event of an Article V-type contingency. According to some opinion polls, many Poles are not convinced that NATO will assist them in a crisis. Increasingly, GoP officials have told us that a strengthened SC, along with the muscle to back it up, is crucial. Sikorski, perhaps Warsaw's most vocal proponent of strong trans-Atlantic security ties, told a U.S. official recently that Poland might seek to diversify its security relationships if its national security needs were not addressed adequately. Sikorski has publicly stated that a major goal of Poland's EU presidency in 2011 is to strengthen cooperation under the Union's European Security and Defense Policy. Separately, Defense Minister Klich warned (Ref B) that Poland may increasingly turn to non-U.S. suppliers of defense equipment if the bilateral ties and the consultative process are not deepened.

WHAT THE POLES WANT

14. (C) Soltysiak told us that Poland wanted to see more Alliance planning for Article V collective defense contingencies, including increased exercises involving U.S. and allied militaries. In this respect, Soltysiak said Warsaw will press for a more explicit recognition of Russia as a potential threat to European security. The GoP will also push for joint NATO-EU operational planning, especially for crisis response and stabilization missions, as well as for a NATO Response Force with real teeth. In addition, Soltysiak said Warsaw will seek an administrative mechanism to "guarantee" Article V responses. He explained that once

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the political decision is made to invoke Article V, it should automatically trigger a process of decisions and military action aimed at eliminating the specific threat, using "all available means." Soltysiak said this provision was a direct consequence of Polish dismay concerning the Alliance's weak response to last year's conflict in Georgia.

15. (C) Other items on Poland's SC agenda include provisions for enhanced intelligence sharing, recognition of new threats like cyber warfare and energy security, and continued support for NATO's open door policy for membership. Poland will also insist that every ally should retain the unrestricted right to host NATO infrastructure on its territory.

ROTFELD KEY TO SUCCESS

16. (C) MFA officials view the experts group as key to final success within the broader Alliance, and they expect Rotfeld to play a key leadership role within the group. Marek Madej, NATO analyst at the MFA-linked Polish Institute for International Relations, told us that although Rotfeld is a private citizen, he had already received "instructions" from the Ministry. Madej predicted that Rotfeld would work closely with the only other regional representative, a member from Latvia. According to Soltysiak, the GoP is aware that achieving consensus within the experts group, let alone among all 28 allies, will be extremely difficult. He predicted that the main opposition to Polish objectives will likely come from countries that are wary of antagonizing Russia: France, Germany and, to a lesser extent, Italy. Soltysiak emphasized that Poland strongly supported expanded engagement with Moscow, but the Alliance should do so only from a position of unity and strength, which means real muscle to back up Article V.

COMMENT

17. (C) MFA and MOD officials have defined Poland's ambitious

SC goals in broad terms, without specifically outlining how the Alliance would actually refocus on collective defense while simultaneously pursuing expeditionary operations. Nor have the Poles suggested how the Alliance would generate the resources necessary to sustain the activities they envision in a new SC -- along with a heightened operations tempo in Afghanistan -- while dealing with reduced defense budgets. Nonetheless, the Poles look at the upcoming debate on a new SC as a unique opportunity to influence the Alliance in a way that takes into account Poland's national security concerns. They have made clear that it would be difficult for Poland to maintain its current level of participation in expeditionary missions if the Alliance does not help Poles feel secure at home through enhanced strategic planning for territorial defense.

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